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Minna von Barnhelm oder Das Soldatenglück von G. E. LESSING. With an Introduction and Notes by SYLVESTER PRIMER, Ph. D. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co. 1890.

This is the latest volume, in the German line, of Heath's Modern Language Series, and an excellent one it is. The editor says in the preface: "I have endeavored to apply those principles of text-criticism which have long been recognized as standard in commentaries on Greek and Latin text-books. Modern languages can never take the first place in 'classic training' until their classical productions are edited with the accuracy and scholarship bestowed upon the classics of Greece and Rome." He has been quite successful in his effort. With the Putnams' texts, such as HART'S 'Goethe's Prose' and WHITE'S 'Lessing's Prose,' with WOLSTENHOLME'S 'Riehl's 'Culturgeschichtliche Novellen,' with THOMAS'S 'Goethe's Tasso,' and with this edition of Germany's greatest comedy, we seem to have entered upon a new era of suitably and scientifically edited German classics. LESSING'S 'Minna von Barnhelm,' though edited again and again at home and abroad, has never been so well edited before. BUCHHEIM'S notes to most of his texts are too full. They translate too much, and too often do the thinking for the student. They remind one of ANTHON'S Greek text-books and seem prepared for pupils without a teacher, for the general reader, and for crammers for examinations in England. PRIMER'S notes do not suffer from these faults. He shows excellent judgment. Moreover, he is painstaking, conscientious, unflinching, when he meets a difficulty; and modest, as when he interprets *sich bedanken* (p. 109, l. 5) 'to decline with thanks' and says, "I am aware, however, that the authorities are against me." Like WOLSTENHOLME, he has a strong regard for, and appreciation of, the untranslatable, which GOETHE says we must reach,—that precious *on ne sait quoi* so hard to catch in a foreign language and so untransferable into another tongue. It is the bird in the bush. Literal translation is—as Mr. LOWELL has called it—the bird in the hand. The spoken language of a great comedy which faithfully reflects life, handled

by a genius like LESSING, is not easy to translate or to annotate. It contains a great many 'birds in the bush'—idioms, peculiar turns of the dialogue, modal adverbs, subjunctives, archaisms and provincialisms—that are very hard to catch and confine in a translation. In fact, many annotators, to say nothing of the general reader, fail to catch more than a glimpse of these *raræ aves*.

The text of this edition is BOXBERGER'S in KÜRSCHNER'S 'National-Litteratur.' Certain coarse remarks of Just about the landlord's daughter at the end of Act I have been rightly enough omitted. BOXBERGER'S foot-notes are retained. They do not look well where they are, and one might wish they had been omitted.

The introduction, of about sixty pages, consists of a biography of LESSING and a critical analysis of the play. In the biography is inserted a sketch of the progress of German literature from OPITZ to LESSING, of the condition of the German stage, and of the intellectual development of the people during this period. This part of the introduction might better have formed a separate section. As it stands, it cuts the biography in two. The introduction would also have looked less formidable and heavy, if on the right hand page there had been running titles such as "Biography," "Analysis of Play," etc. The biography is so well done, that the editors of other works of LESSING in this series will need only to refer the student to this volume, which is very properly the first, containing, as it does, the author's most popular work.

At the end is a Lessing-bibliography of the works the editor has had occasion to draw from. Of course he controlled all essential sources. Students will readily appreciate the extracts on LESSING, from HEINE'S 'Über Deutschland' in BUCHHEIM'S 'Heine's Prose,' and from LOWELL'S essay on LESSING in 'Among my Books' I, pp. 291-348.

After carefully going over the Notes I have only the following brief list to which exception might be taken:

P. 75, ll. 17, 19. Why should *Er* be called "blunt" when we have just been told that "towards the end of the seventeenth century (and in LESSING'S own time) the *Er* and *Sie* of the singular were considered more polite

than *Du* and *Ihr* (when persons are not intimate)''?

P. 76, l. 4. GRIMM's Dictionary *sub* 'lauern' 4 a is better authority than BUCHHEIM, who is quoted at length.

P. 76, l. 30-31. The sense of "dry" in *nüchtern* seems far-fetched, as well as the remark that "in Just's mind thirst is provocative of piety." The choice ought to be left us between *nüchtern*="sober," that is, not having had a drop to drink, and "without breakfast," "on an empty stomach," that is, having had neither to eat nor to drink. Prof. PRIMER is a little severe upon Just anyway. He says Just is "from the dregs of society" (p. 70). Just is honest, faithful, and kind to beasts—good qualities, as the world goes.

P. 95, ll. 27, 28. Why would *unser zwei einem* be a more proper expression than *ihrer zwei einem*? Werner means "two to one," "two men lie in wait for one." It would seem the third person plural is quite in place.

P. 121, l. 28. *Mit* is probably a "bird in the bush." It does not mean 'also' here. That is pretty clear. I doubt whether it ever has superlative force. GRIMM's Dictionary *sub* 'mit' i, 3, does not warrant that statement. If "taken" were supplied in English, *mit* might be translated here by 'along.'

P. 141, l. 3. *Wir wären allein* is to our mind a species of potential subjunctive of the kind that may be called the "guarded" or "diplomatic" subjunctive. So are the subjunctives pp. 93, l. 4; 119, l. 17; 157, l. 20. "Es ist mit unserem Conjunctiv ein wunderlich Ding," says HILDEBRAND.

P. 160, l. 11. This note on *Vormittage* puts implicit trust in LEHMANN's statement concerning "Dehnung auf e" in his 'Lessing's Sprache,' p. 197. LEHMANN jumbles together old *jo*-stems (for example, *Glücke*); old weak substantives and adjectives (for example, *Herze*, *Herre*); adverbs in -e (for example, *gerne*, *feste*, *balde*), and calls all these *e*'s "Dehnungen." *Vormittage*, as is hinted at by HEYNE in GRIMM's Dictionary *sub* 'Mittag' 2 b, and as is roundly stated by LEXER *sub* 'Nachmittag,' is nothing but "zusammengerücktes" *vor* and *Mittage*, which is entitled to the -e as dative sign. I remember hearing, in dialects, *vormittage* and *nachmittage* with-

out a preposition. When the compound nouns *der Vormittag*, *Nachmittag* became established with their proper accent, they may have changed the accent of *vor Mittage* to *Vórmittage*. Present good usage may require *Vormittag* here, but the editor's right to drop the -e is very questionable. Cf. GOETHE'S 'Faust,' i, 2903-4. (Weimar ed.):

Verzeiht die Freiheit die ich genommen,
Will Nachmittage wiederkommen.

If LEHMANN is wrong, then Professor PRIMER's remark about *gewohne* in l. 15, p. 92, will not hold good. "The final -e is the -e so often attached to the nominative of substantives by LESSING." *Gewohn* and *gewohne* are found in the literary language. The latter is claimed (first by GRAFF, I think) to be common in dialects; for example, in Berlin. Whether this -e is adverbial or flexional, or due to association with the noun, I am not now prepared to say. O. H. G. *giwona*, M. H. G. *gewone* are strong feminine nouns; also the O. S. weak adjective *giwono*, M. H. G. *gewone*. The dialect form *gewohne* is quite appropriate in Werner's mouth, and there is no reason for changing it into the standard and common hybrid *gewohnt*, as many editors have done.

There are misprints on p. 99, l. 21; p. 170, l. 23; p. 224, l. 24; p. 227, l. 18 (*über einer Sache nachdenken* should be *über eine Sache*). On p. 32 should not "preceding" be "following"?

In conclusion, mention should be made of one more excellent feature of the notes; namely, that they are not full of grammar. There are references to JOYNES-MEISSNER, WHITNEY, and the undersigned.

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A Study of Ben Jonson. By ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. New York: Worthington and Co., 1889.

If the old and threadbare saying, "good poets make bad critics," ever had need of another refutation, we may certainly find it here. Those who have learned to know and to love the poetry of Mr. SWINBURNE, have long since recognized the brilliancy of his prose, and the high rank which he has won for himself as a critic in his admirable treatment